

CONFIDENTIAL

72

#204

EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

OCI #0989/72
31 Oct. 1972

State Dept. review completed

Tito Addresses LCY Presidium On Purge

On Monday, Tito convened the LCY presidium on Brioni and in his address discussed his reasons for purging the Serb party leadership. He expressed confidence in the new Serb leaders--"they are known, not so much throughout Yugoslavia, but...to Serbia's working class." He also praised the removals in Slovenia and Macedonia as "tremendously significant for the whole of Yugoslavia." Tito also indicated that "a dialogue" has been initiated in Bosnia-Hercegovina, presumably to be followed by high level expulsions there. In his general characterization of the purge, he stressed the need for more young people and more workers in leading positions. In closing, Tito warned that complete fulfillment of his plans is necessary to avoid serious factionalism in the LCY. He particularly warned that the Serbs must perform without reproach if the other regional party organizations are to follow through effectively. The level of participation at the meeting by regional party leaders gives a clue as to the current situation. The new Serb party boss Tihomir Vlaskalic failed to speak, probably because he is now busy preparing a plenum to define the scope of the purge. Branko Mikulic head of the Bosnia-Hercegovina party was also not heard from, undoubtedly because of the impending changes hinted at by Tito. Interestingly, Mirko Canadanovic, the Vojvodina party chief who has been fighting a running battle with critics in his organization, spoke and this seems to imply that he will survive the purge. No party leaders from Kosovo spoke at the meeting. Mahnut Bakali, the young Kosovo party chief has been a prominent proponent of decentralization, and may well be in serious trouble in Pristina.

The presidium, as expected, fully endorsed Tito's purge and his plans for tightening party discipline. It did add a note of indecision, however, on the third party conference--originally set for the third week in November. The presidium announced that another meeting on 13 November would set the date for the conference. It appears that the party leaders are perplexed by the task of carrying out Tito's purge at the same time that they are supposed to be holding deliberations on the complex document on youth policy reform to be adopted at the conference. The presidium avoided a decision on the postponement, probably out of deference to Tito. Tito will oppose any delay in the conference because this would give vent to speculation that his purge has upset the LCY's ability to act

25X1

CONFIDENTIAL

-2-

decisively--exactly contrary to his goals in the current purge.

25X1

Czechoslovak Party Plenum

Prague continues to do battle with the ghosts of its ideological past and present. At a Central Committee plenum on 26 and 27 October 29 speakers discussed a presidium report on the "Principal Tasks of Ideological Work after the 14th Party Congress". The report, presented by Vasil Bilak, praised the party's victory in the ideological sphere over rightist opportunists and claimed a majority of the population under-

stood that Soviet assistance in 1968 prevented civil war and counterrevolution. On the other hand, the party must remain vigilant, for counterrevolutionary forces continue their attack on the party and the whole socialist camp, though with different and more clever means. Bilak called for a struggle to raise the purity of Marxist-Leninist standards in the party, culture and the economy and noted this as an "urgent task" in light of the decrease in the number of party people working in the ideological field.

Other speakers provided more details about what worries the party leadership. Alois Indra admitted that the development of Marxist theory has been a "weak spot" and that the party has had difficulty recruiting well-trained and eager people in the social sciences who could carry out this task. Another Central Committee member reported on developments in the Czech Writers Union and alleged that discredited right wingers had attempted to "penetrate" publishing houses and magazines under assumed names.

Party exhortations to purity of thought and deed have little effect on the population at large or the vast majority of party members. Such a Central Committee session serves mainly as a pep rally for the true believers who need periodic reminders that they hold the source of truth. According to the American Embassy in Prague the tone of the plenum was "something short of triumphant."

The session did not indicate any shift in relationship within the leadership. Husak remained in the background giving only a eulogy for a deceased comrade and some general closing remarks. He thus distanced himself from this call for increased ideological fervor. Bilak's prominent role confirms his more conservative outlook. Alois Indra, who was removed from the secretariat earlier this year, chaired one of the sessions and still must be considered to be in the top leadership.

25X1

Czechoslovak-French Relations: Plus ça Change

The Czechoslovak government seems determined to remain safely within its protective shell. This was clearly shown during the recent visit of Deputy Foreign Minister Ruzek to Paris. Three sessions were held during the two day visit. In the first on CSCE the Czechoslovak merely parroted known Soviet positions. The second concerned bilateral economic and political relations which were described as practically non-existent politically and of only minor importance economically. A third dealt with Germany and produced nothing new.

The Quai Political Affairs Director told visiting Assistant Secretary Stoessel that the French government has been trying to bring Prague out of its post-August 1968 isolation but without success. The French were "amused if rather depressed" by the fact that the Czechoslovaks even announced termination of a student exchange program which dates back to 1928.

This behavior in Paris contrasts with Czechoslovakia Foreign Minister Chnoupek's talks with Secretary of State Rogers in which he called for an improvement in Czech-US relations and may indicate that little can be expected in the near future. 25X1

25X1
[Redacted]
NOTE : THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ABOVE REPRESENT
ONLY THE ANALYSIS OF THE EE BRANCH.